



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Federal Projects

Conserving New Jersey's Resources

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Ecological Services
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*The mission of the
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
is working with others to
conserve, protect and
enhance fish, wildlife,
plants and their habitats for the
continuing benefit of the American people.*



Federal Projects

Federal Projects include a wide variety of activities aimed at protecting and improving the quality of life for the American people. The role of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) in federal projects is to assist other federal agencies in planning for those projects that affect the public's fish and wildlife resources. Specifically, the Service is most involved with the extensive planning that is necessary for federal water resource projects, which include flood control, shoreline protection, and navigation.

The mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Specifically, the Service is charged with protecting *federal trust fish and wildlife resources*, which include migratory birds, migratory fish, certain marine mammals, federally listed endangered and threatened species, and all wild living resources on federal lands. To fulfill the Service's mission with

respect to water resource projects, Service biologists assist the lead federal agency as part of the planning team. Planning teams include a variety of professionals such as engineers, economists, hydrologists, sociologists, archaeologists, and biologists, each responsible for representing various aspects of the public interest. The Service biologist's role on the planning team is to ensure that the final project design includes conservation of the public's fish and wildlife resources.

Why Is the Service Involved in Federal Projects?

The Service's involvement in planning for federally funded projects is mandated by three closely related environmental laws.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

requires the lead federal agency to obtain assistance from the Service and State wildlife agencies to ensure that fish and wildlife conservation receives equal consideration in project planning.

Endangered Species Act

requires the lead federal agency to consult with the Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service during planning to ensure that project construction or implementation does not jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed endangered or threatened species.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

requires that for any "major federal action that significantly affects the quality of the human environment," the lead federal agency shall prepare a detailed environmental impact statement and seek input from the public and from agencies (such as the Service) that have special expertise regarding project-related environmental impacts. Through

NEPA, the Service, other federal and State agencies, and public organizations evaluate alternative project designs and recommend measures to protect public interests, including fish and wildlife.

Thus, all three environmental laws integrate the Service into project planning to represent the public's concerns for fish and wildlife.

Project Planning at Work in New Jersey

In New Jersey, the Service's New Jersey Field Office is most involved in planning for flood control, beach erosion, and navigation (dredging) projects with the Philadelphia and New York Districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Project planning involves careful analysis of alternatives to select a plan that best serves the many needs of the public, which include conserving fish and wildlife. In keeping with the Service's *Mitigation Policy*, Service biologists assist the Corps to identify existing fish and wildlife resources in the project area; assess potential impacts on fish and wildlife from alternative project designs; and identify means to *avoid*, *minimize*, or *compensate* (in that order) for adverse impacts to fish and wildlife.

For example, flood control planning involves examining alternative means to reduce property damage, which may include construction of levees or detention basins, or floodplain restoration. Construction alternatives may reduce the quality and quantity of fish and wildlife habitats, especially within forested wetlands and along stream corridors. Service biologists work with Corps planners to ensure that any structural features are designed to avoid or minimize impacts on the highest-quality fish and wildlife habitats and to compensate for unavoidable impacts by restoring or creating similar habitats within the project area. In addition, an understanding of the biology and life requirements of individual species often enables Service biologists to recommend construction modifications or seasonal restrictions to minimize impacts without costly project redesigns.

Accessibility Statement:
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How Can You Influence Federal Projects?

The NEPA requires public participation in federal planning. Thus, federal action agencies advertise and conduct public meetings to identify problems and concerns early in the NEPA review and planning process. Consider attending these *public scoping meetings* to voice your ideas. The NEPA review process also promotes written comments. Therefore, as part of the public, you are encouraged to become involved by expressing your ideas and concerns, orally or in writing. Remember that good planning fosters efficient use of *our* tax dollars. Through good planning, federal projects can benefit people directly *and* enhance fish and wildlife, a significant part of our Nation's natural heritage, for future generations.

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